

Policy Statement 4.1 – Continuing Professional Development

Position Summary

Dentists have a professional obligation to engage in continuing professional development throughout their practising careers. Dentists should be free to choose the continuing professional development that is appropriate for them but only the Dental Board of Australia accredited programs may lead to registration or define a practitioner's scope of practice.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) and its Branches have a long history of encouraging and providing continuing professional development (CPD) to their members.
- 1.2. Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme from 1 July 2010, mandatory CPD became a requirement for continuing registration.
- 1.3. CPD activities are not accredited. Post-graduate studies and educational requirements for peripheral areas of practice may be counted in the hours completed as part of the CPD registration requirement.
- 1.4. There is limited evidence indicating that better health and safety outcomes arise from mandatory CPD as opposed to voluntary programs of fostering, accreditation and recognition.¹
- 1.5. There is evidence that infrequently used, and highly technical skills fade over time – for example CPR and resuscitation, thus regular refresher courses are worthwhile.²

Definitions

- 1.6. ACCREDITED COURSE is a formal program of education accredited by an Australian dental education accrediting authority.
- 1.7. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.8. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) is the means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives.
- 1.9. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency via the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.10. RANGE OF PRACTICE is the duties an individual dental practitioner chooses to practice, within their category's scope of practice, for which they are formally educated and trained in programs accredited by the Australian Dental Council and are currently competent.
- 1.11. SCOPE OF PRACTICE is a clearly defined list of prescribed duties within dentistry for each category of dental practitioner which should be delineated by regulation.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dentists have a professional and ethical obligation to engage in CPD throughout their practising

¹ <https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-023-00803-x>
<https://danz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Recertification-review/Dental-Council-literature-review-recertification-March-2017.pdf>

² <https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-023-00803-x>

careers.

- 2.2. Given the informal and non-accredited nature of CPD, endorsement of providers and programs is not required.
- 2.3. Only accredited courses should lead to registration or extending scope of practice within the dental practitioner division
- 2.4. The ADA, Australian Dental Schools, specialist associations, and other dental groups should have a role in fostering and providing CPD.
- 2.5. There should be equitable access to CPD activities.
- 2.6. Dentists should be free to choose the CPD that is appropriate for them.
- 2.7. The mandating of arbitrary levels of CPD for the dental profession generally is not supported.
- 2.8. Further research into the relationship between CPD and the safety and quality of patient care should be supported.
- 2.9. CPD activities should not require providers or programs to be recognised or accredited.
- 2.10. The ADA and its Branches, by providing appropriate CPD, should support their members to comply with any regulatory requirements.
- 2.11. The management of emergencies and the techniques for resuscitation change from time to time. Dentists should ensure they keep up with these changes. Regular "hands-on" training is recommended for dentists and their staff.

Policy Statement 4.1

Adopted by ADA Federal Council, April 18/19, 2002.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 7/8, 2005.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 20/21, 2006.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 14/15, 2011.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 18/19, 2013.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 14/15, 2016.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 6/7, 2017.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, August 21, 2020

Amended by ADA Federal Council, August 18, 2023